

Erotic French fare with "Betty"

BETTY BLUE (18)

Jean-Hugues Anglade, Beatrice Dalle, Gerard Darmon, Consuelo de Havilland

FoxVideo

★★★★

Erotic French language thriller directed by the acclaimed Jean Jacques Beineix.

A weird handyman Zorg (Anglade) and a girl just about to slip over the edge of sanity into madness, Betty (Dalle) travel round France merely waiting for her to go completely bananas.

NICK FALDO'S JUNIOR MASTERCLASS (E)

Golfing Instruction

First Independent Sports

★★★

Seventy minutes of top level instruction for budding young golfers.

Joined by five young players, champion golfer Faldo explains and illustrates the basics of the game, including driving, long and short iron play, bunkerplay and golfing etiquette.

1991 T T REVIEW (E)

Motorcycling

Duke

★★★

An hour of almost non-stop motorcycling action taken from the recent Isle Of Man T

Above left: "Betty Blue's" Zorg (Anglade) and Betty (Dalle).

T races, covering eight races and action footage from over 100 different locations around the 37 mile course.

PARENTHOOD (15)

Steve Martin, Mary Steenburgen, Dianne Wiest, Jason Robards

CIC Video

★★★★

Excellent ensemble comedy/drama which some will find too true to life for comfort!

The plot hinges on the extended Buckman family and in particular over-protective father of three Gil (Martin), who is determined to have a better relationship with his kids than the one he had with his father (Robards). Other family members include Gil's sensible wife Karen (Steenburgen), his sister Helen (Wiest) a harrassed divorcee, and her two wayward teenage children Julie (Martha Plimpton) and the silent, bag-toting Garry.

"Parenthood" is warm, winning and thoroughly enjoyable for all age groups.

ENGLAND'S TRIBUTE TO GARY LINEKER/ ENGLAND'S TRIBUTE TO PETER SHILTON (BOTH E)

Football

Watershed Pictures

★★★

Two informative hour-long profiles of two of the national team's top players.



TO BE THE BEST PARTS I & II (15)

Lindsay Wagner, Anthony Hopkins, Stephanie Beacham, Christopher Cazenove

Odyssey Video

★★★

Two volume mini-series based on the Barbara Taylor Bradford best-seller.

The third and final saga in the trilogy finds business empire heiress Paula O'Neill (Wagner) pitted against hated cousin Jonathan Ainsley (Cazenove) as they battle to control the family industry.

Schmaltzy, star-studded, jet-setting stuff.

THE INSOMNIACS' VIDEO (U)

Sleep Inducing Video!

Odyssey Video

★★★

Having trouble getting to

beddy-byes at night? Watch this 50 minute video of sheep jumping over fences and you'll be snoring like a baby!

GOLDFISH (U)

Relaxation

Odyssey Video

★★★★

Good fun gimmicky video aimed at unravelling those jangled nerves caused by the hectic pressures of the rat-race as a few goldfish swim around the screen.

GRAHAM GOOCH 333 AND ALL THAT (E)

Cricket

PolyGram Video

★★★

A 58 minute profile of the England cricket captain detailing the highlights of his lengthy career for both the national side and county side Essex.

The ORIGINAL Goldfish Video

GOLDFISH

The fully portable aquarium for home or office

- * Relieves stress, trauma, tension and anxiety
- * No need to add water
- * Guaranteed fully organic

Nick Faldo's JUNIOR MASTERCLASS

The World's No.1 Golfer Shows All Future Champions How It's Done

Weststar

A RON HOWARD Film

Parenthood

STEVE MARTIN
TOM HULCE • REX MORANIS • MARTHA PLIMPTON • KARAN REEVES
JASON ROBARDS • MARY STEENBURGEN • DIANNE WIEST

It could happen to you.

CIC VIDEO

BARBARA TAYLOR BRADFORD TO BE THE BEST

Lindsay Wagner, Anthony Hopkins
Stephanie Beacham, Christopher Cazenove
and Fiona Fullerton

THE FINAL FRONTIER

From the audacious moment in Stanley Kubrick's **"2001 A Space Odyssey"** (MGM/UA Video: 1968) when a spiralling bone thrown by a primate segues into futuristic space ship, we have been fascinated by distant galaxies, mesmerised by outer space and longed to explore the lure of the unknown worlds it brings.

This inspirational jump cut—in fact, it's more of a millenium cut—may have been only a small step for Kubrick, but is a quantum leap for sci-fi filmdom, which from this point on, was to become enraptured with wide-screen solar systems, enveloped in darkness save for sporadic glittering stars, in turn punctuated by the appearance of gleaming spacecraft looming over the horizon—awesome in both magnitude and conception.

In the non-too-halcyon days preceding this, the earth became the epicentre to all

Andy Black takes a space walk through the history of sci fi on video.

manner of extra-terrestrial activity, due to a combination of different factors. The end to the *human* slaughter in World War II resulted in a population receptive to more distinctly ethereal delights, fuelled by a rising interest in "real-life" UFO's that ushered in the watchwords "keep watching the skies".

It was to beyond the reaches of the earth's orbit that we had to look for our "visitors" arrival. Howard Hawk's **"The Thing From Another World"** (Kingston Video: 1951), sees the title creature accidentally unfrozen from its Antarctic spaceship and laying waste to the scientists and soldiers who surround it. Despite its rather dated appearance now, the film still manages to exude a capricious charm and

provides enough chills, but nothing to compare with John Carpenter's unjustly maligned, special-effects laden remake, simply entitled **"The Thing"** (CIC Video: 1982).

Carpenter retraces steps and fully develops the central theme in John W Cambell's source novel that the "thing" can assimilate any human form—not so much a whodunit but a who is it? picture. Carpenter, as he amply illustrated in the taut **"Halloween"** (Channel 5: 1979), is the right man to eke out every ounce of tension from the plot.

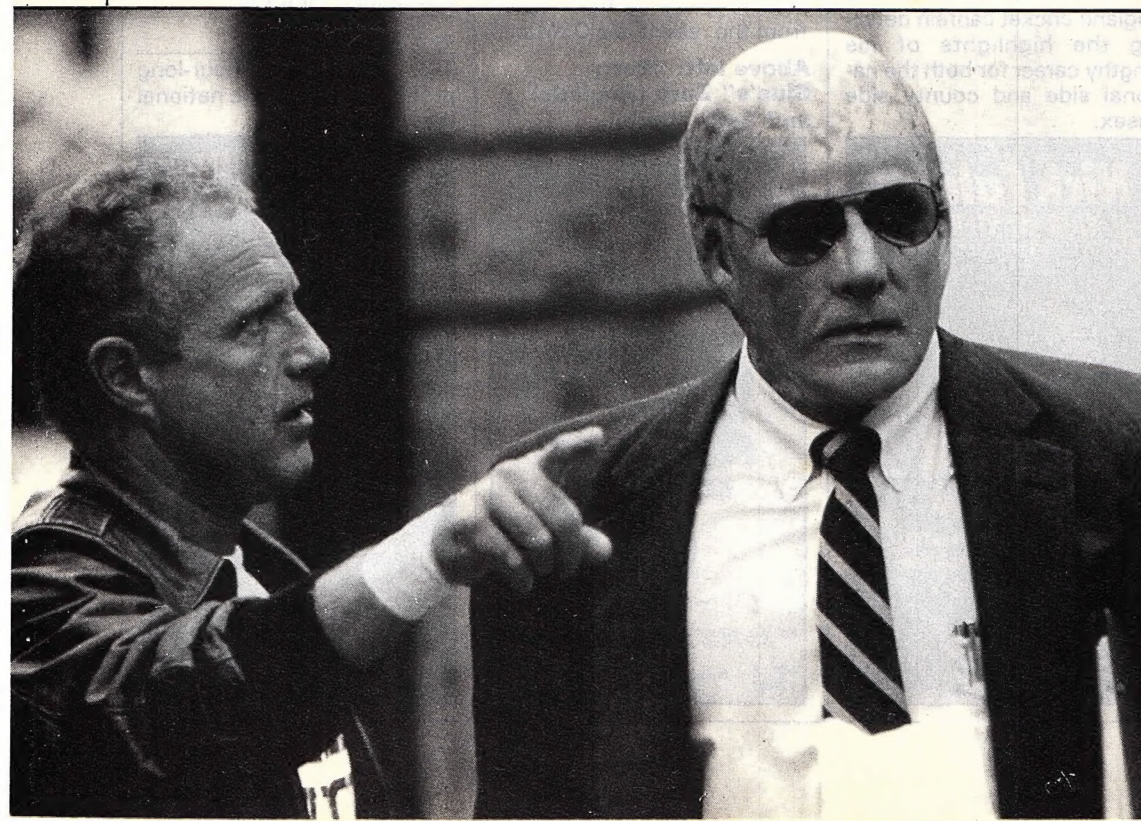
Complemented by some stunning visuals, the ravishing Arctic photography, the desolate snow-bound base, the eerie discovery of the "thing's" previous victims enshrined in icy tableau, Carpenter's film is also enhanced by a downbeat, though intrinsically satisfactory ending as we ponder who (if anyone) is now the

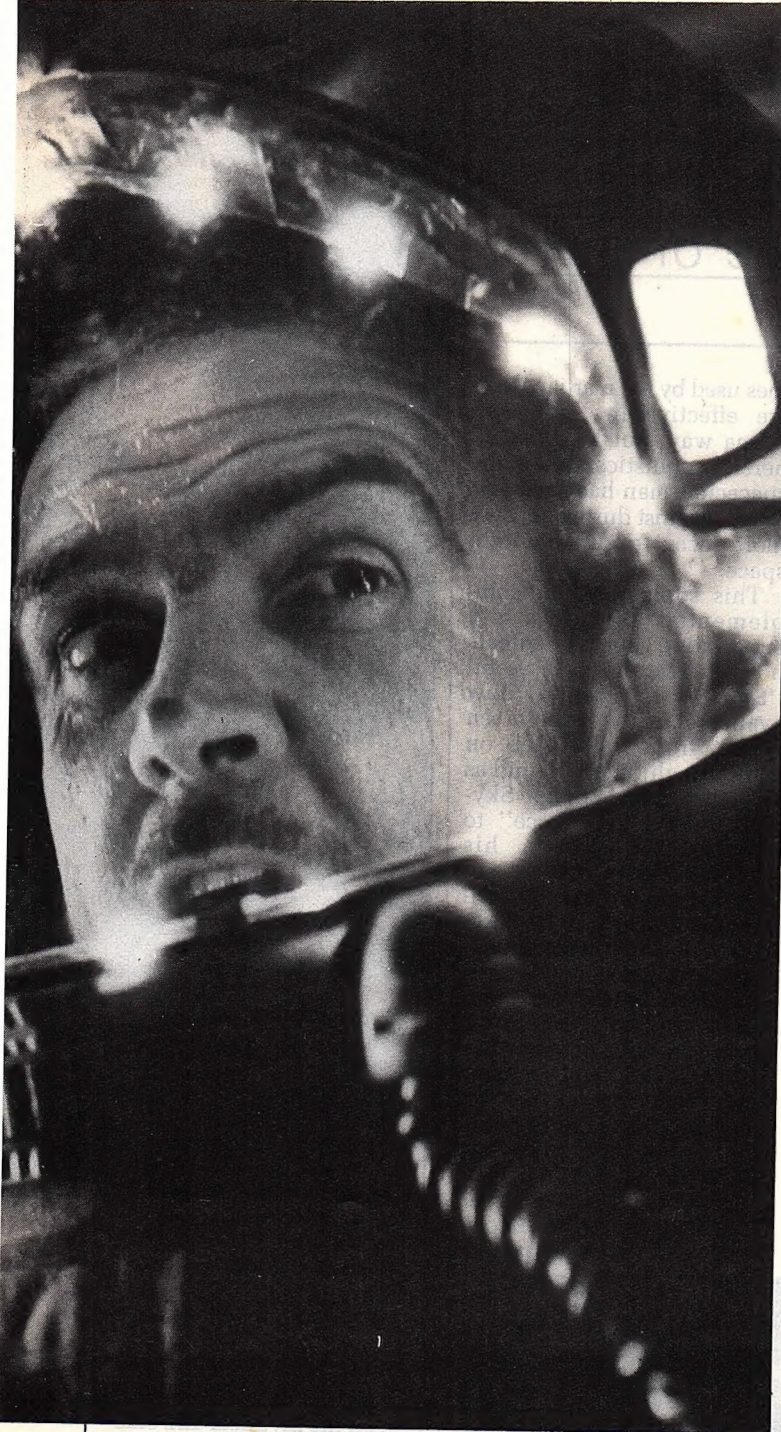


"thing".

Vampiric aliens appear in **"Not Of This Earth"** (MGM/UA Video: 1956), later remade in 1987, greedy aliens in **"Bad Taste"** (Bad Taste Video: 1988), and over-sexed aliens in the Jeff Goldblum/Geena Davis vehicle **"Earth Girls Are Easy"** (Braveworld: 1989). Alien substances have bombarded the earth in **"The Blob"** (Braveworld: 1958), starring a very young Steve McQueen in his first film role, we had **"Beware The Blob"** in 1972 and literally cowered from it in the big budget 1987 remake. It was contaminated alien blobs that caused horrifying Boris Karloff problems in **"Die, Monster Die"** (RCA/

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way into our society. That said, the rather benevolent aliens in "It Came From Outer Space" (CIC Video: 1953), are merely "stopping by" whilst their damaged spaceship is repaired.

More malevolent motivations drive the aliens in "Invasion Of The Bodysnatchers" (Video Collection: 1956), where embryonic pods hatch out a steady procession of "human" clones—despite the doomed admonition from Kevin McCarthy to the unsuspecting populace that "you're next, you're next".

This, the ultimate in paranoia movies, spawned countless (usually inferior) imitations including "Westworld" (MGM/UA Video: 1973), "The Stepford Wives" (1975) and "Cocoon" (Fox Video: 1985), plus the more intriguing "Alien Nation"

Left: Sean Connery in the space western "Outland". Above: a scene from the 1953 "War Of The Worlds." Below: Ripley (Sigourney Weaver) heads back to battle the aliens in "Aliens". Far left: James Caan in the creepy "Alien Nation".

(Fox Video: 1987). Human paranoia is given an extra ingredient in "The Forbin Project" (1968) as on this occasion an out of control computer begins its quest for global domination. The libido-induced domination of Julie Christie is the *raison d'être* for the malfunctioning computer's actions in "Demon Seed" (MGM/UA Video: 1977).

A shift from "procreation" between humans and computers to between humans

Columbia: 1965), a voracious plant infecting Richard Wordsworth in **The Quatermass Experiment**" (1955) and a giant meteorite that nearly led to the earth's destruction in "Meteor" (Warner Home Video: 1979).

Other life forms have recently plumbed the depths of the sea in James Cameron's "The Abyss" (Guild Home Video: 1989), a visually rich, if not entirely water-tight offering, though the logic exhibited in "Deep Star 6" (Guild Home Video: 1990), and "Leviathan" (Fox Video: 1990), is even less fathomable.

Despite having dipped his toe, or tail, or claw in the water, more extra-terrestrials have preferred to keep themselves rooted firmly on dry land in order to inveigle their



'Close Encounters Of The Third Kind—a genuinely uplifting experience of man's contact with other beings'

and aliens occurs in the imaginatively titled **"I Married A Monster From Outer Space"** (1958) as Gloria Talbot gradually realises her spouse (Tom Tryon) isn't quite all he seems. More appealing—certainly to the male population—were Hazel Court's army of large-breasted followers, all intent on making baby Martians in the frivolous **"Devil Girl From Mars"** (1954), and the sultry Kim Basinger as a rather decorative alien in **"My Step-mother Is An Alien"** (RCA/Columbia Home Video: 1987).

It is rather more mechanical desires (and characters) that propel Vincent Price in his quest to build an army of super lady robots in **"Dr Goldfoot And The Bikini Machine"** (RCA/Columbia Home Video: 1966) and **"Dr Goldfoot And The Girl Bombs"** (1966), whereas Klaus Kinski's more altruistic motives lead him to create lady companions for his own creation, Max 404 (Don Opper), in the above average **"Android"** (IFS/Fox Video: 1982).

Less sex and more emphasis on "making contact" (without exchanging bodily fluids!) arises in Steven Spielberg's **"Close Encounters Of The Third Kind"** (RCA/Columbia Home Video: 1977) whose awesome depiction of the aliens "mother ship", a glittering mass bathed in incandescent light, literally illuminating the night sky, is a genuinely uplifting experience of man's contact with other beings.

It is certainly more provoking than his syrupy, though undeniably heartfelt parable of boy meets alien, boy loses alien, that pervades the phenomenally popular **"ET—The Extraterrestrial"** (CIC Video: 1982), or the pseudo authenticity that **"Commun-ion"** (First Independent: 1990) purport to recount, adapted from a "non fiction" Whitley Streiber book detailing his experiences at the hands of aliens!

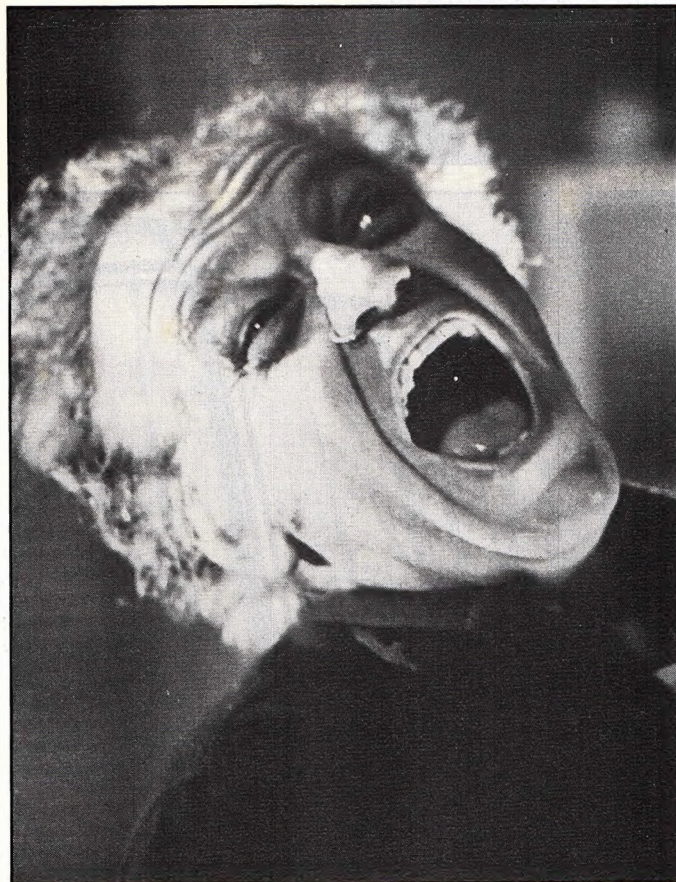
Streiber could have done with the services of the law enforcement automaton in **"Robocop"** (MCEG Virgin

Video: 1987), who in turn, would have found Arnold Schwarzenegger's appropriately named **"The Terminator"** (MCEG Virgin Vision: 1984) a worth adversary. Very much on the wrong side of the law, humanoid Arnie travels back from the year 2029AD to the present day to obliterate the young woman (Linda Hamilton) who will give birth to the eventual "terminator" of the robot society Arnie habits. The recently released at your local cinema **"Terminator 2—Judgment Day"** (1991), features two terminators, one good, one evil. The superlative effects in these films (if not their urban locale) are also readily apparent in Arnie's **"Predator"** (Fox Video: 1987).

One thing you can never accuse Arnie of is being slow to catch a cold, which is exactly what happens to the would-be Martian invasion force in **"The War Of The Worlds"** (CIC Video: 1953), that sets about destroying the chaos-ravaged streets of Los Angeles. The impressionistic death-dealing flying mach-

ines used by the martians here are effective in their own prima way, but lack the inherent sophistication of the spacecraft man has used and fought against during his own more recent excursions into space.

This sophistication, complemented by uniformly superlative special effects helped create the successful **"Star Wars"** series (now available in the widescreen format from Fox Video on sell-through). Mark Hamill as swashbuckling Luke Skywalker uses the "force" to enable him to win his princess (Carrie Fisher) and save her planet from the evil Imperial Forces lead by Darth Vader (David Prowse). This is fairytale premise is set amidst some genuinely original scenes, the mutations in the space bar, the likeable robot C3PO and R2D2 and a rousing finale as Luke powers his spaceship in on the Imperial base using computer co-ordinated firepower to destroy it. The resulting sequels, **"The Empire Strikes Back"** (1980) and **"The Return Of**

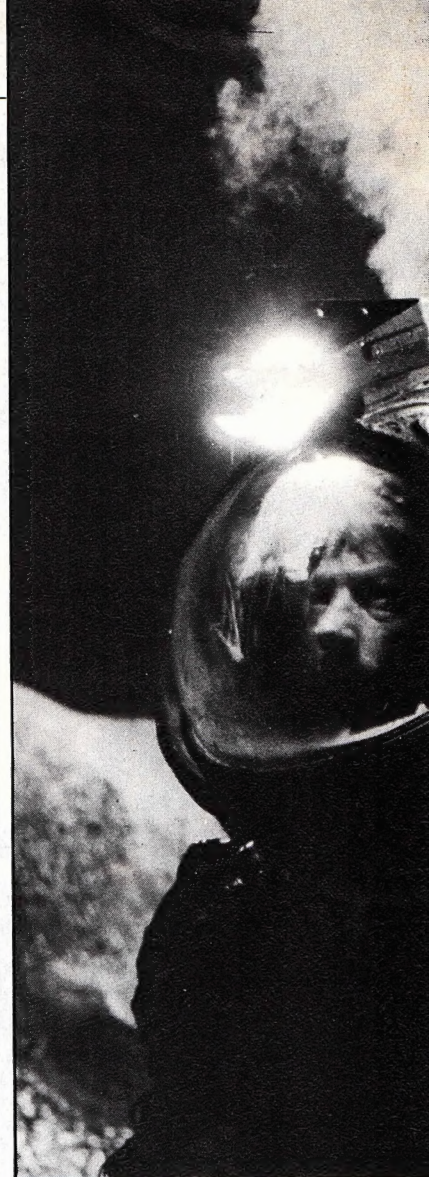


Above: John Hurt and Tom Skerritt in **"Alien"**, first of the intergalactic horrors. Below: scream again—John Carpenter's **"The Thing"**.

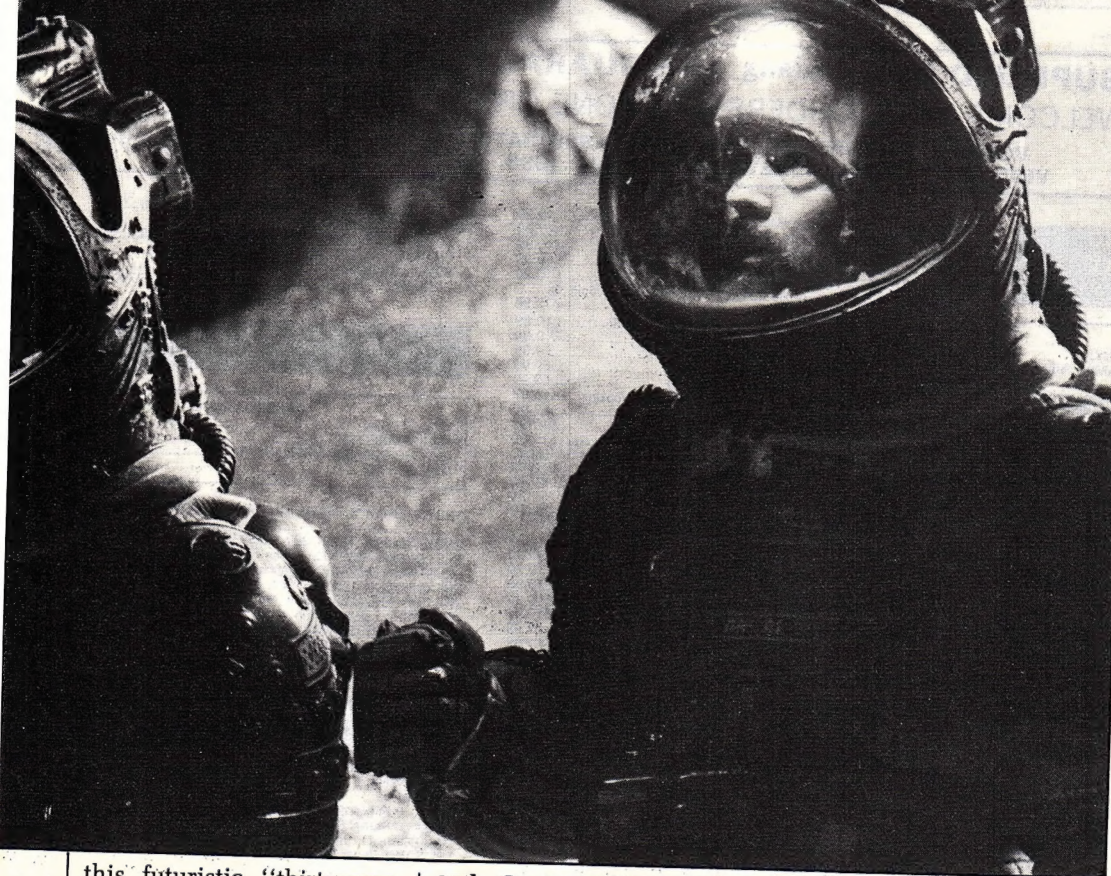
The Jedi" (1983) focus attention on the mythical and emotional complexities Luke experiences upon learning that Vader is in fact his father and the princess his sister.

In the wake of the "Star Wars" success a plethora of similar films surfaced, aspiring to if not quite reaching such phenomenal popularity. Disney's visually impressive though thematically empty **"The Black Hole"** (Walt Disney Video: 1979) has Maximilian Schell as a megalomaniac scientist going nowhere fast, an affliction that is also prevalent in the disappointing **"Battlestar Galactica"** (CIC Video) of the same year, which merely serves to showcase an endless array of space battles.

The ennui exhibited here was preceded by **"Logans Run"** (MGM: 1976) which barely breaks into a walk as Michael York and Jenny Agutter attempts to escape



FINAL FRONTIER



this futuristic "thirtysomething" society whose oligarchy brainwashes its people into believing that death is imminent upon reaching the magical three, O.

The protagonists here required some of the derring-do oozing from Buster Crabbe's dynamic savior of the universe in **"Flash Gordon"** (1936). His bravery is needed in equal quantities both to defeat the malevolent Emperor Ming of the planet Mongo, and to pilot that infernal decrepit space junk-ship of his! After reprising his role in **"Flash Gordon's Trip To Mars"** (1938) and **"Flash Gordon Conquers The Universe"** (1940), Flash's next screen incarnation was in Mike Hodge's **"Flash Gordon"** (Thorn EMI Video 1980), most famous for the almost surreal sight of the hulking Brian Blessed sporting wings as the "Hawkman", and a memorable music score from distinguished rock band Queen.

Buster Crabbe, however, was to also appear, to much less effect, in **"Buck Rogers"** (1939), fighting for democracy, and Buck was still battling in **"Buck Rogers In The**

25th Century" (CIC Video: 1979). Buck, though, lacked the staying appeal of "Flash", and certainly did not inspire the soft-core "epics" which the latter character spawned. The sporadically funny **"Flesh Gordon"** (Entertainment In Video: 1974) substitutes "Flesh" for "Flash", "Wang" for "Ming", and "Porno" for the planet "Mongo": Phallus-shaped rocket ships and a fiendish attempt to turn the earth's inhabitants into a populace of sex maniacs, propel the plot before the recently released **"Flesh Gordon Meets The Cosmic Cheerleaders"** (1990), where Flesh is kidnapped by some busty cheerleaders only to be "rescued" by his girlfriend—shame!

After a brief flirtation with the space western in Sean Connery's **"Outland"** (Warner Home Video: 1981), a "High Noon" in space, and **"Battle Beyond The Stars"** (Warner Home Video: 1980), a "Magnificent Seven" narrative reinforced by the including of that film star, Robert Vaughn and also Sybil Danning pouring herself into a Valkyrie warrior's costume, we then

witnessed the space parody.

To this end the "Alien" inspired **"Creepozoids"** (Bad Taste Video: 1987) appeared, the alien connection here the only inspiring item save for another Linnea Quigley role (!), and another "epic" **"Slave Girls From Beyond Infinity"** (Bad Taste Video: 1987) displayed slave girls with infinite charms but a plot beyond critical analysis.

The usually funny Mel Brooks managed to hit some, if not all of the targets in his **"Spaceballs"** (MGM/UA Home Video: 1987). Character's names such as Dark Helmet and Lone Starr will give you an indication as to which film he is spoofing here.

No spoofing, just carefully crafted atmosphere and space vampires proliferate Mario Bava's **"Planet Of The Vampires"** (RCA/Columbia Home Video: 1965), where kaleidoscope colours and swirling mists abound as a group of vampires take over the occupants of a spaceship as the inaugural steps to their world domination. Superbly evocative scenes of the aliens being

resurrected from their plastic enshrouded space tombs create the authentic *frissons* necessary.

Bolstered by above-average production values and effects **"Titan Find"** (Channel 5: 1986), with the manic Klaus Kinski, creates a similarly eerie atmosphere to Bava's film, as a creature escapes from a crate to terrorise the crew of the spacecraft.

Florence Marley as a haemophilic vampire cuts a swathe through the cast list in 1966's **"Queen Of Blood"** but she cannot compare with Mathilda May's space vampire Tobe Hooper's flawed but enjoyable romp, **"Lifeorce"** (Video Collection: 1985). Superlative effects again, depicting the wholesale destruction of a now anarchy-ridden London pale next to the sight of the "birthday suited" May wandering the streets sucking the "life-blood" from victims, her appearance raising a few eyebrows at the very least!

The rather less attractive rubber-suited vampire monster in **"It—The Terror From Beyond Space"** (1958), puts the bite on the crew members of an expedition to Mars. This seems to have provided the inspiration for one of the most impressive space-monsters epics of the cinema, Ridley Scott's simplistic but compelling **"Alien"** (Fox Video: 1979). The film transcends its "B" movie premise of an alien creature slowly decimating the crew of the Nostromo spaceship. Scott extracts maximum tension from these scenes and the constantly evolving alien (prawn-like in appearance), and provides some jolting shocks amongst the labyrinth corridors of the ship. The famous John Hurt amongst "indigestion scene" also raises the pulse, as well as emptying the stomach!

An impressive though somewhat overrated sequel, **"Aliens"** (Fox Video: 1986), replaces the original's mythical sub-text with more "gungho" actioning as Sigourney Weaver's Ripley (reprising her role from the previous film), this time leading a group of high-tech commandos in a "seek and destroy" mission to eliminate the aliens. Besides meeting the "Mother Alien" the way is paved for the forthcoming **"Aliens 3"**.

The concluding part of **"Final Frontier"** appears in our next issue.

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